



Testimony in Support of SB 271

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak today in support of SB 271.

My name is Tom Wood; I've been in the hospitality industry for 34 years and I'm currently the owner of Sullivan's Black Forest in Frankenmuth. While the main floor of Sullivan's features our restaurant, the second floor is a separate banquet room for private events. We've held wedding receptions and business meetings in this private room – such as last year's MLBA Fall Convention.

As a business owner, not having the ability to create hospitality packages that include both food and alcohol can be cumbersome, not only for me but for our customers as well. Everyone that plans an event at our establishment has a budget they'd like us to stick to. The majority of our customers don't understand the liquor laws and rules, so when we're not able to give them a set price on alcohol for their event it creates a lot of frustration.

Take a wedding reception, for example. With the current rule, establishments can only quote and charge ahead for food while itemizing the sales of alcohol after. No one can predetermine how much a group of people will drink, therefore the client does not know if they will stay within a preset budget. They can feel like they've had the rug pulled out from under them when the cost of alcohol is presented after the event has taken place. This bad experience reflects badly on us, even though it's outside of our control.

If I was able to offer packages for private gatherings that included the cost of alcohol per person per hour, our clients will be better prepared to stick to their budgets without any unexpected surprises after the event. We'd be able to provide a wonderful experience for our customers, which means good word of mouth to promote our business.

As a liquor licensee, I'm required to serve responsibly and make sure that intoxicated persons and minors are not served, and this responsibility would not be affected by the proposed legislation. If the appropriate exception is applied and stipulations laid out for me and other licensees, this will be to the benefit of all involved.

I'd like to thank you, Mr. Chairman and Committee members, for taking the time to listen to us today.

Sincerely,

Tom Wood
Owner
Sullivan's Black Forest
Frankenmuth